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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Substantive session of 1997
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Items 7 (a) and (b) of the
provisional agenda**
REPORTS, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUBSIDIARY
BODIES: ECONOMIC QUESTIONS,
ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS

Letter dated 31 March 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a resolution of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea calling for the cancellation of a plan by a power company of Taiwan Province of China to ship 200,000 barrels of radioactive waste to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Chapter 22 of Agenda 21 specifically deals with the issue of radioactive waste. At its second session, in May 1994, the Commission on Sustainable Development called upon the international community to take all necessary steps to prohibit the export of radioactive waste, except to countries with appropriate waste treatment and storage facilities. Furthermore, radioactive wastes are cited as one of the major threats to the environment in a document of the fifth session of the Commission (E/CN.17/1997/4).

The fact that a power company of Taiwan Province of China could attempt to export radioactive waste to a country where appropriate facilities are lacking, without being subject to any existing international regulatory mechanism, clearly testifies to the need to strengthen the current international regime controlling the transboundary movement of radioactive waste. The newly emerging threat and danger to the environment arising from irresponsible and

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inappropriate transboundary movements of radioactive waste deserves the serious attention of the Commission on Sustainable Development and of the General Assembly at its special session.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would arrange for the present letter and the annexed resolution to be circulated as an official document of the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, under item 4 of the provisional agenda, and of the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21.

(Signed) PARK Soo Gil
Permanent Representative

Annex*

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PLAN TO SHIP TAIWAN'S NUCLEAR WASTE TO NORTH KOREA

The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea,

Stressing that good-neighbourliness is the supreme value in relations between neighbouring countries, and that the environment should be protected and preserved not just for our generation but also for our descendants,

Deeply concerned that nuclear waste, even of low or mid-level radioactivity can seriously affect the environment for human beings, and that damages caused by radiation may last longer than a century,

Bearing in mind the generally accepted principle of international law that nuclear waste should be stored or disposed of in the country where they are generated,

Noting that Taiwan's attempt to ship its nuclear waste to North Korea, seeking its own benefit at the expense of another country's environment, is ethically unacceptable,

Recalling that the European Union declared it wrong for economically and technically advanced nations to export nuclear waste to developing countries by adopting in 1989 the Lome Convention which banned the EU member States' shipment of nuclear waste to African, Caribbean and Pacific region,

Expressing our firm belief that it is unacceptable for North Korea to import nuclear waste against the interest of our nation and at the risk of contaminating our people's living environment,

Deeply concerned that such an unscrupulous step taken by North Korea can jeopardize the ongoing inter-Korean cooperative projects,

Sincerely hoping that Taiwan will contribute to the promotion of friendly and cooperative relations in this region by withdrawing its plan to ship nuclear waste to North Korea,

1. Strongly urges the Taiwanese authorities to immediately stop the plan of exporting their nuclear waste to North Korea;

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2. Sternly demands in the name of the Korean people that the North Korean authorities not import nuclear waste from Taiwan or any other source in order to preserve the health and safety not just of our own generation but of our future generations as well.